

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6438

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 5 AMMAN 9771

NODIS/CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM ATHERTON

DEPT PASS JIDDA FOR ATHERTON ONLY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR JO US XF

SUBJECT: ATHERTON'S TALK WITH PRIME MINISTER RIFAI

SUMMARY: IN SEPARATE MEETING FOLLOWING MY TALK
WITH KING, I REVIEWED WITH PM RIFAI THE TALKING
POINTS YOU APPROVED. HE SAID THAT HE HOPED THE US
COULD ALSO TELL THEM WHAT IT COULD AGREE TO AND NOT
ONLY WHAT IT WOULD OPPOSE; IF THE STATEMENT I HAD
MADE WAS THE FINAL POSITION, WE WERE DEFINITELY ON
A COLLISION COURSE WITH SYRIA. NEITHER GOLAN, A
PREPARATORY CONFERENCE OR GENEVA LOOKED POSSIBLE.
SYRIA SAW THE UNSC DEBATE AS A POSITIVE WAY TO MOVE
AHEAD. ASAD (WHOM RIFAI SAW EARLIER THURSDAY) HAS
CONCLUDED ALREADY WE WILL VETO A RESOLUTION IN JANUARY,
BUT WOULD STILL LIKE TO TRY FOR AN ACCOMMODATION. ASAD
TOLD RIFAI OUR PRESENTATION OPENED NO WINDOW FOR HIM,
BUT HE WAS PLEASED WE WANTED TO AVOID A COLLISION IF
POSSIBLE. RIFAI SAID THAT ANY RESOLUTION WILL HAVE TO
INCORPORATE ISRAELI FULL WITHDRAWAL TO 1967 LINES,
RECOGNITION OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS, PLO PARTICIPATION
IN NEGOTIATION, AND DEFINING THE COMMITMENT TO PEACE.
JORDAN IS URGING MODERATION ON SYRIA AND SYRIA HAS
AGREED TO CONSULT CLOSELY WITH JORDAN ON THE UNSC

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RESOLUTION. JORDAN WANTS TO AVOID A COLLISION COURSE

AND WILL DO WHAT IT CAN TO STAY IN CLOSE TOUCH AND
INFORM US OF THE SYRIAN DRAFT RESOLUTION AND FALL BACKS
TO SEE ABOUT WORKING UP AN ACCEPTABLE
ACCOMMODATION. SYRIA HAS CONCLUDED THE US WILL PROBABLY
VETO, BUT WOULD LIKE A POSITIVE VOTE OR AN ABSTENTION.
US SHOULD AVOID BEING AS ISRAELI AS THE ISRAELIS IN
NEW YORK AND THE POLARIZATION IT IMPLIES. RIFAI
CRITICIZED EGYPT ON SINAI, AND SAID IN JANUARY UNSC
MEETING HE THOUGHT EGYPT WOULD SUPPORT FULL ISRAELI
WITHDRAWAL TO THE 1967 LINE AND PLO PARTICIPATION IN
NEGOTIATION TO GET BACK INTO THE ARAB FOLD. ON PLO
PARTICIPATION, RIFAI SAID JORDAN SUPPORTS THEM NOW, BUT
IS CONFIDENT THAT THE PLO WILL DIVIDE ITSELF AND END UP
WEAKENED IF IT TRIES TO NEGOTIATE, REOPENING
POSSIBILITIES FOR JORDAN TO BE INVITED BACK INTO NEGOTIATING
PROCESS. THE REJECTIONISTS WILL SPLIT THE PLO OVER THE
ISSUE. I EMPHASIZED FOR RIFAI THE LIMITATIONS ON OUR
POSITION IN NEW YORK, YOUR DISAPPOINTMENT AND CONCERN
OVER THE CRITICISM OF SINAI II AND THE IMPACT OF THE
SINAI AGREEMENT IN CATALYZING FOR AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION
THE GREAT DANGERS FOR OUT COUNTRY OF A FAILURE TO PROGRESS
TOWARD PEACE IN THE AREA. RIFAI SAID HE HAD TALKED TO
THE PLO IN DAMASCUS DEC 18 ABOUT JORDAN'S COMING
ELECTIONS AND TOLD THEM JORDAN WAS POSTPONING ELECTIONS.
THE PLO PRESSED FOR CONSULTATION ON THE QUESTION AND A
DIALOGUE WITH THE PLO WHICH RIFAI SAID HE REBUFFED.
END SUMMARY.

8. I MET WITH PRIME MINISTER RIFAI AT 6:00 PM ON
DECEMBER 18 WITH AMBASSADOR PICKERING. TALKS WERE
INTERUPTED BY MEETING WITH CROWN PRINCE AND CONTINUED
FOLLOWING DINNER WITH RIFAI.

2. I TOLD RIFAI THE PURPOSE OF MY VISIT, ITS CLOSE CON-
NECTION WITH THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE IN EARLY
JANUARY AND THEN OUTLINED FOR HIM POINTS IN MY PREPARED
TALKING POINTS PAPER.

3. RIFAI RESPONDED TO MY INITIAL PRESENTATION AND SAID THAT WHAT
I HAD TOLD HIM WAS NOT NEW TO HIM AND THAT I WOULD NOT FIND
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WHAT HE HAD TO SAY NEW EITHER. HE STRESSED THAT HE WANTED
TO BE REALISTIC IN DEFINING WHAT IS GOING ON. HE NOTED
THAT JORDAN COULD NOT ALWAYS INFLUENCE EVENTS IN THE WAY
THEY WOULD LIKE AND TENDED TO BE MORE INFLUENCED BY EVENTS.
HE NOTED ALSO THAT WE HAD MADE CLEAR WHAT THE US WOULD NOT
AGREE TO -- ANY CHANGE IN 242/338 OR PLO PARTICIPATION IN THE
NEGOTIATING PROCESS IN THE ABSENCE OF ITS ACCEPTING THE
BASIC UN RESOLUTIONS ON THE EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL. HE SAID

WE WERE REPEATING PREVIOUSLY KNOWN VIEWS AND WERE NOT
REALISTIC AND IF THIS WERE THE FINAL US VIEW, HE SAW US
LAUNCHED ON A COLLISION COURSE. HE SAID HE BELIEVES WE
ALREADY HAVE AN IMPASSE IN PROGRESS TOWARDS PEACE. IF

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6439

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 5 AMMAN 9771

NODIS/CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM ATHERTON

DEPT PASS JIDDA FOR ATHERTON ONLY

THE SYRIANS HAD NOT CALLED FOR A SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING, HE ASKED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN. GENEVA IS NOT POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF DIFFERENCES OVER PLO ATTENDANCE. A PREPARATORY CONVERENCE ("GENEVA WITHOUT CALLING IT GENEVA") MIGHT RUN INTO DIFFICULTIES OVER PLO REPRESENTATION. ALTERNATIVELY WHY NOT HAVE THE SECURITY COUNCIL BECOME A PREPARATORY CONFERENCE AND THEN DEFINE THE ISSUES. HERE I POINTED OUT THERE WOULD BE NOT A FEW EXTRANEUS MEMBERS. ON THE GOLAN, RIFAI SAID THERE COULD BE NO MOVEMENT. THE SYRIANS WERE NOT READY TO DO ANYTHING WITHOUT SOMETHING FOR THE PALESTINIANS. WITHOUT THE SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING NOTHING WOULD HAPPEN, BUT WITH IT WE KEEP UP THE MEMENTUM. IT WOULD BE A DIFFICULT TO WAIT A WHOLE YEAR. A SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING CAN BE DEFENDED AS AVOIDING AN IMPASSE. IT WILL BE VERY UNFORTUNATE IF WE DIFFER. JORDAN AGREES THAT NO UNREALISTIC OR TOO RAPID STEPS FOR THE US SHOULD TAKE PLACE. JORDAN DOES NOT WANT TO PUT THE US OVER ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE. I MADE IT CLEAR THIS WAS ALSO OUR DESIRE.

4. RIFAI CONTINUED BY SAYING THAT JORDAN HAD HOPED THE
US COULD TAKE THE STEP OF A SMALL UNILATERAL WITHDRAWAL
OF A FEW KILOMETERS ON THE GOLAN. ASAD COULD NOT REFUSE THAT,
BUT THE ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS SEEM NOW TO MAKE THAT AN

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IMPOSSIBLE PROPOSITION.

5. GOING ON, RIFAI NOTED THAT THERE WAS ONE SIMPLE BASIC
QUESTION: "IS ISRAEL WILLING TO WITHDRAW FROM ALL THE
TERRITORY OCCUPIED IN 1967?" IF THE ANSWER IS YES, IT
WILL BE EASY TO WORK OUT. IF THE ANSWER IS NO, AS IT IS
NOW, THEN ALL OF OUR EFFORTS WILL BE A WASTE OF TIME.
NO ARAB IS GOING TO CONCEDE TERRITORY TO ISRAEL. IF
ISRAEL SAYS ONLY A PARTIAL WITHDRAWAL IS POSSIBLE, THEN
IT IS ALL A WASTE OF TIME. WE ARE IN A CEASE FIRE NOW, BUT
WE WILL HAVE ANOTHER WAR. WE ARE NOT
GOING TO DEFEAT ISRAEL AND WE WON'T CAPITULATE.
ANOTHER WAR WILL ONLY BRING MORE DESTRUCTION AND UP-
HEAVELS. WE HAVE TOLD SYRIA THAT WE DO NOT WANT A WAR.
IH IS OUR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY. WE TELL SYRIA IT SHOULD GO TO
WAR ONLY IF WE ARE 100 PERCENT SURE WE CAN WIN AND CANNOT SOLVE
THE PROBLEM POLITICALLY AND THIS CONDITION CAN NEVER BE
ACHIEVED.

6. RIFAI SAID THE SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING WAS POLITICAL
SUGARCOATING FOR THE SYRIAN MANDATE RENEWAL. SYRIA DID NOT
WANT TO REMOVE UN FORCES AND THUS PROVIDED A PRETEXT FOR AN
ISRAELI ATTACK, BUT IT HAD TO HAVE A REASON TO RENEW THE MANDATE.

7. IN THE UNSC MEETING THERE WILL BE A RESOLUTION.
WE DON'T KNOW WHAT IT WILL BE YET. WE HOPE TO COME OUT
WITH A JOINT POSITION ON THE PREMISE THAT A US VETO IS
TAKEN FOR GRANTED. THEY EXPECT TO GET THIRTEEN OR
FOURTEEN VOTES THEMSELVES AND REGARD THE US AND ISRAEL
AS BEING ODD MAN OUT. BUT THIS IS NOT WHAT THEY DESIRE.
I SAW ASAD THURSDAY AND HE ASKED ME TO PASS A MESSAGE TO YOU
THAT HE IS ANXIOUS FOR A JOINT POSITION WITH THE US. THE
LAST THING HE WANTS TO DO IS TO ANTAGONIZE THE UNITED
STATES. HE WAS FOR THE FIRST TIME SPECIFIC AND POSITIVE.
I ASKED IF I COULD QUOTE HIM. HE SAID TO TELL YOU THAT
THIS WAS REALLY MY (RIFAI) UNDERSTANDING OF HIS POSITION.
ASAD'S POSITION IS THAT SOMETHING NEW IS NEEDED NOW.
RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338 ARE OKAY AND WE CAN LEAVE THEM
ON THE SIDE." WHAT NEW THINGS HAVE TO BE ADDED? TOTAL
ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, RECOGNITION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE
PALESTINIANS, AND THE DEFINITION OF THE COMMITMENT TO

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PEACE ALL HAVE TO BE WORKED OUT. IF THE US CAN'T ACCEPT THIS, IT MIGHT WELL HAVE TO TAKE ON ALL TWENTY ARABS IN A COLLISION WITH THE WHOLE ARAB WORLD. TWENTY ARAB STATES WILL PROBABLY ACCEPT THIS AS A JOINT ARAB RESOLUTION AND MAYBE AFRICANS AND LATIN AMERICANS WILL JOIN THEM IN A FREE-FOR-ALL DEBATE. THEY WILL NOT UNDER-STAND WHY THE US IS THE ONLY PARTY AGAINST THE RESOLUTION ONLY TO PLEASE ISRAEL. THE ARABS ARE NOT ASKING FOR ISRAEL'S DESTRUCTION. THE SOONER ISRAEL REALIZES THIS THE BETTER. WE DO NOT THINK YOU SHOULD PAY THE PRICE FOR YOUR ISRAELI POSITION. ALSOP'S LETTER (IN THE NY TIMES MAGAZINE) WAS RIGHT AND IT IS ABOUT TIME SOMEBODY SAID IT. ISRAEL SHOULD NOT DICTATE US FOREIGN POLICY. "A US NEWSMAN JUST TOLD ME THAT THE ISRAELI FOREIGN OFFICE HAD DRAFTED AMENDMENTS TO THE US LAWS ON THE BOYCOTT AND THAT HIS PUBLICATION WOULD NOT PRINT THE STORY." THE QUESTION IS "IS THE US POSITION IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE US OR MERELY OF ISRAEL." IT IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR THE US TO PLEASE BOTH THE ARABS AND THE ISRAELIS AND IT IS A GREAT DISERVICE IF THE US SEEMS SO ONESIDED. IT LOSES CREDIBILITY AS A PEACE-MAKER.

8. THE SOVIETS ARE NOT TAKEN SERIOUSLY BY THE ARABS AND HAVE NO INFLUENCE WITH THE ISRAELIS. THE ARABS WOULD PREFER TO DEAL WITH THE UNITED STATES. IF THE UNITED STATES IS SEEN AS A PARTNER ON THE SIDE OF THE ISRAELIS, THE AREA WILL BE LEFT OPEN TO THE SOVIETS AND EXTREMISTS.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6440

S E C R E T SECTION 3 OF 5 AMMAN 9771

NODIS/CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM ATHERTON

DEPT PASS JIDDA FOR ATHERTON ONLY

WE BELIEVE YOU MUST CONTINUE TO BE THE PEACEMAKER AND THE ARBITRATOR BUT NOT THE DICTATOR OF THE PEACE TERMS. WE WANT YOU TO COME UP WITH A NEW POSITION TO MAINTAIN YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS. WE WERE THE ONLY ONE IN THE PAST NOT TO BREAK RELATIONS WITH YOU AND WE WANT TO SPEAK FRANKLY ABOUT THIS.

9. EGYPT IS ANOTHER FACTOR. SADAT WILL FIND IT HARD TO CONTINUE UNLESS SOMETHING COMES UP. HE STILL HOPES SOMETHING WILL TURN UP. IF THE US VETOES A RESOLUTION ON PALESTINIAN RIGHTS AND ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, SADAT WILL BE BADLY UNDERMINED AND HE MAY WANT TO BACK IN A NEW DEAL WITH THE SOVIETS. IN THE MIDDLE EAST, ALL CHANGES ARE POSSIBLE.

10. JORDAN HAS ALWAYS BEEN PROUD OF ITS RELATIONS WITH THE US AND WANTS TO BE POSITIVE WITH SYRIA AND NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT. YOUR OPEN SUPPORT OF THE ISRAELI POSITION MAKES IT MUCH MORE DIFFICULT FOR US.

11. AS FOR THE FUTURE, WE MUST KEEP IN TOUCH. WE WILL TELL YOU ABOUT THE SYRIAN RESOLUTION AND WE WILL TRY TO MODERATE IT. IT WILL POSSIBLY INCLUDE ALL OF THE PRINCIPLES I HAVE OUTLINED AND AS FAR AS WE KNOW, YOU ARE NOT AGAINST ITS

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PRINCIPLES. PLO PARTICIPATION IS A QUESTION OF FORM NOT SUBSTANCE AND IT WILL HELP TO MAKE A MOVE TOWARD THE PALESTINIANS. I POINTED OUT TO RIFAI THAT JORDAN HAD URGED US TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP ON THE SINAI. HE SAID THAT WAS LATER AND ONLY AFTER IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO GET ANYTHING ON THE WEST BANK. HE STILL THINKS SADAT MADE A MISTAKE ON THE TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT BUT NOT THE US. A STEP WAS NECESSARY AND RIFAI SAID "I CANNOT ANSWER NOW WHETHER THINGS WOULD BE BETTER WITHOUT THE SINAI AGREEMENT THAN THEY ARE WITH IT." BUT SOME POINTS OF THE AGREEMENT WERE A MISTAKE. THE ARAB DIFFERENCE IS NOT WITH THE UNITED STATES AND IT IS AN INJUSTICE TO ASSOCIATE THE US WITH CRITICISMS OF THE SINAI AGREEMENT. SADAT WAS NOT REQUIRED TO ACCEPT ISRAELI TERMS. THAT IS WHY THERE IS SO MUCH SENSITIVITY TO THE AGREEMENT IN THE ARAB WORLD. IT IS AN INTER-ARAB PROBLEM. I POINTED OUT THAT CRITICISM OF SINAI II STILL REFLECTED ON OUR EFFORTS AND WAS

NOT HELPFUL.

12. RIFAI SAID THAT ASAD HAD BEEN POSITIVE TOWARD OUR CONVERSATION BUT THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN PLEASED WITH MY BRIEF. RIFAI AGAIN SAID THAT ASAD WANTED TO REASSURE US THAT HE WANTS TO TRY TO AGREE WITH US ON A RESOLUTION AND WOULD BE MOST PLEASED WITH AN AFFIRMATIVE VOTE OR AN ABSTENTION BUT NOT SURPRISED AT A US VETO. I NOTED THAT WITHIN THE LIMITS WE HAD DISCUSSED, THIS IS PRECISELY WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO DO. RIFAI SAID ASAD THOUGHT OUT STATEMENT WAS A CLOSED CIRCLE AND THERE WAS NO WAY OF WORKING OUT A COMPROMISE. I TOLD RIFAI THAT WE HAD SAID WE WANTED TO TRY TO WORK OUT A CONSTRUCTIVE SOLUTION WITHIN THE LIMITS I DESCRIBED. RIFAI AGAIN SAID THAT ASAD WAS QUITE SERIOUS AND GENUINE ABOUT WORKING THINGS OUT. BUT HE KNOWS THE US LIMITATIONS WHICH HE SAYS MAKE A COMPROMISE IMPOSSIBLE WITH OUR PRESENT POLICY.

13. I POINTED OUT THAT IN THEIR EVALUATIONS OF SINAI THE JORDANIANS IGNORED ONE ESSENTIAL ELEMENT--THE EXTENT TO WHICH SINCE THE SINAI ACCORD THE US PUBLIC WAS AWARE OF THE COSTS TO US OF NO PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY WERE PREPARED TO GIRD THEM-

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SELVES FOR A MAJOR EFFORT TOWARDS SETTLEMENT IN A YEAR OR SO. WE HAVE TO CONTINUE TO DEVELOP THE PUBLIC OPINION BASE. IMPATIENCE AND OVERREACTION IN THE ARAB WORLD WILL REVERSE THIS PROCESS AND SET US BACK TO 1973. RIFAI SAID HE THOUGHT PUBLIC OPINION WAS CHANGING BUT THAT THERE WAS STILL A BIG GAP BETWEEN THE PEOPLE AND THE CONGRESS. I POINTED OUT THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME WE HAD PROBING QUESTIONS ON THE ISRAELI MILITARY REQUESTS. BUT THE REAL TRAGEDY WOULD BE IF HAVING COME THIS FAR, THE PROCESS WERE REVERSED. RIFAI AGREED WE SHOULD GUARD AGAINST THIS. I TOLD HIM WE CANNOT TELL PUBLIC OPINION THAT WE CAN ADMIT THE PLO (WITHOUT A CHANGE ON THEIR PART) AS A PARTICIPANT IN THE NEGOTIATIONS, AND IDEA WHICH INHERENTLY MEANS WE HAVE TO GET THE ISRAELIS TO AGREE. RIFAI SAID HE IS CONFIDENT THE PLO WILL CHANGE. HOW ABOUT GETTING THE ISRAELIS TO RECOGNIZE THEM FIRST ON THE BASIS THAT THEY WOULD BE PREPARED TO RECOGNIZE THE PLO IF THE PLO WOULD RECOGNIZE ISRAEL?

14. I AGAIN POINTED OUT THAT A MOVE IN THE PLO POSITION TOWARD ISRAEL WOULD GIVE US SOMETHING TO WORK WITH. RIFAI SAID THEY ARE NOT SURE. SUPPOSE THE PLO ATTENDS THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND ASKS FOR ITS MOST CON-

SERVATIVE POSITION--THE 1947 PARTITION PLAN. THAT PLAN
IN ITSELF RECOGNIZES ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST IN PRINCIPLE.
US HAD ADVANCED A GREAT DEAL WITH ITS VOTE ON THE MANDATE
RENEWAL. I POINTED OUT THAT THIS IN ITSELF IS EVIDENCE
THAT WE ARE NOT DIRECTED BY ISRAEL. ISRAEL WANTED US
TO VETO THE RESOLUTION. RIFAI SAID HE HONESTLY THINKS
IT IS IN ISRAEL'S INTEREST TO DEAL WITH THE PLO. HE
KNEW A SEPARATE PALESTINIAN ENTITY WOULD HELP US TOO.

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S E C R E T SECTION 4 OF 5 AMMAN 9771

NODIS/CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM ATHERTON

DEPT PASS JIDDA FOR ATHERTON ONLY

BUT WHATEVER COMES IN THE FUTURE WILL BE A PROBLEM
FOR ISRAEL AND JORDAN. RIFAI SAID HE WAS NOT
SURE THE WEST BANK ACCEPTED THE PLO. IF ISRAEL WERE
TO WITHDRAW, HE IS NOT SURE THEY WOULD ALLOW THE PLO TO
COME IN. BUT THE PALESTINIANS WANT SPOKESMEN. THIS
IS WHAT EXISTS, WHY OPPOSE IT? WE DO NOT LIKE IT ANY
MORE THAN THE ISRAELIS DO.

15. I THEN TOLD RIFAI THAT WE HAD GIVEN HIM OUR THOUGHTS
AND MADE CLEAR OUT LIMITS BUT WE DO NOT HAVE A
CLOSED MIND. RIFAI SAID ASAD WILL WORK WITH YOU.
CONFIDENTIALLY, RIFAI SAID, WE WILL TRY TO PREPARE THREE
RESOLUTIONS IN DECREASING DEGREES OF SEVERITY FOR THE SYRIANS
TO SEE WHETHER THERE IS ANY OVERLAP WITH YOUR POSITION.
I SAID I HOPED THAT WE CAN AVOID SYRIAN AND EGYPTIAN
COMPETITION ON THE RESOLUTION AT THE SECURITY COUNCIL.

16. (FOLLOWING DINNER) I TOLD RIFAI I WOULD LIKE A LITTLE MORE CLARIFICATION OF THEIR VIEWS ON THE PLO PARTICIPATION IN NEGOTIATIONS. WE ASSUME THEY DO NOT WANT TO CLOSE THE DOOR ON JORDAN NEGOTIATING FOR THE WEST BANK WHICH YESSEZZEYSSB#N OUR VIEW.

17. RIFAI REPLIED THAT JORDAN'S POSITION IS SIMPLE AND WE
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DO NOT DISAGREE WITH THE US ON THE FINAL RESULT. WE ARE NOT NOW IN A POSITION BECAUSE OF THE RABAT DECISION TO NEGOTIATE. WE BELIEVE WE CANNOT FORCE A CHANGE AND IN THE MEANTIME THE PLO SHOULD PARTICIPATE. OFF THE RECORD, IF THEY DO THIS IT WILL HURT THEM AND THEIR MOVEMENT. IT WILL PUT THEM IN A STATE OF INTERNAL COMPETITION. PUSHING THE PLO FORWARD WILL NOT BE DOING IT A SERVICE. IT WILL EMPTY THE PLO. THE PLO GAINED ITS PRESENT POSITION BY USING GUNS AND WAS APPOINTED BY THE ARABS. IF THEY HAVE TO THROW AWAY THEIR RIFLES AND PICK UP PENS, THEY COULD LOSE THAT RIGHT. THEY WOULD HAVE TO SUPPORT IT AND BACK IT UP THEMSELVES AND THEY ARE NOT GOING ANYWHERE. I ASKED IF THEY WERE ADMITTED, WOULDN'T THEY BE EQUAL TO A STATE PARTICIPATING IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. RIFAI SAID SUCH A STEP WOULD DIVIDE AND SPLIT UP THE PLO BETWEEN THE REJECTIONISTS AND THE OTHERS. MANY PALESTINIANS ON THE WEST BANK THINK JORDAN IS THE ONLY PRACTICAL ANSWER. "THE PLO WOULD KISS OUR FEET FOR US TO NEGOTIATE ON THEIR BEHALF NOW. WE CANNOT DO IT." WE ARE DOING WHAT WE THINK IS BEST. THE VIEWS WE GAVE YOU IN LONDON ARE STILL OUR OWN. BUT IF YOU THINK WE ARE WRONG OR THERE ARE OTHER WAYS OF DOING THINGS, WE CERTAINLY WANT TO DISCUSS IT WITH YOU. I TOLD RIFAI WE CANNOT GIVE HIM A JUDGMENT NOW AND WE WILL BE THINKING ABOUT IT.

18. RIFAI SAID WE SHOULD DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO KEEP THE DOOR OPEN ON THE SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING. WE WILL TRY TO GET SYRIA TO BE REASONABLE AND TO AVOID A COLLISION. WE CAN DO IT IF YOU CAN TAKE A STEP FORWARD. AS YOU TAKE ONE STEP, WE WILL GET THEM TO TAKE THREE. BUT IF YOUR PRESENT VIEWS ARE A FINAL POSITION, IT IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH AND IT IS JUST NOT POSSIBLE TO AVOID A COLLISION. I TOLD HIM THAT THE POSITION I HAD GIVEN HIM WAS OUR POSITION, BUT I WOULD REPORT BACK WHAT HE AND ASAD HAD SAID. ASAD HAD SAID THERE WERE NO WINDOWS. WE ARE NOT TALKING TACTICS BUT ARE TALKING ABOUT PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPTS. RIFAI SAID IT IS POSSIBLE TO SEE HOW YOU CAN WORK AROUND YOUR PRESENT POSITION. I TOLD HIM THAT IN OUR VIEW STATING

THAT FULL WITHDRAWAL WAS NECESSARY WOULD CHANGE 242,

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WHICH IS DELIVERATELY IMPRECISE; IT DOES NOT RULE OUT A FULL WITHDRAWAL BUT DOES NOT ENDORSE IT EITHER. RIFAI SAID IF THERE CANNOT BE A TOTAL WITHDRAWAL, THEN THERE IS A REAL PROBLEM. I TOLD RIFAI THAT OUR VIEW HAD ALWAYS BEEN THAT IT WAS UP TO THE NEGOTIATIONS TO DEFINE THE EXTENT OF WITHDRAWAL. WE HAVE AVOIDED THE ASSOCIATION OF FULL WITHDRAWAL WITH 242. RIFAI THEN SAID EXPLAIN YOUR POSITION AND ABSTAIN. THE SYRIANS NOW DO NOT KNOW WHAT THEY WANT IN ANY PRECISE TERMS. WE DO NOT SEE WHAT WE CAN DO POSITIVELY BUT WE WANT TO BE HELPFUL.

19. WE THEN TURNED TO THE QUESTIONS OF THE EGYPTIAN ROLE. RIFAI THOUGHT EGYPTIANS WOULD GO OUT OF THEIR WAY TO SUPPORT THE PLO AND TOTAL WITHDRAWAL IN AN EFFORT TO GET BACK INTO THE ARAB WORLD. I TOLD RIFAI WE WOULD BE CONCERNED IF THERE WAS A PROCESS OF COMPETITIVE BIDDING BETWEEN EGYPT AND SYRIA.

20. RIFAI ONCE AGAIN STRESSED THAT WE SHOULD NOT BE SENSITIVE ABOUT CRITICISM OF THE SINAI AGREEMENT. CRITICISM WAS OF ITS TERMS AND NOT THE UNITED STATES. KHADDAM HAD COME TO AMMAN WITH SIX PAGES OF CRITICISM FOR THE COMMUNIQUE. WHAT FINALLY APPEARED WAS MY DRAFT AND ASAD DECIDED KHADDAM WAS BEING TOO AGGRESSIVE AND ACCEPTED WHAT I PROPOSED. THERE IS NOT ONE WORD IN THE COMMUNIQUE AGAINST THE AGREEMENT BUT WE WERE ONLY TRYING TO DEFINE ITS EFFECTS ON THE ARABS AND THE RESULTS OF IT ON THE POSITION OF THE ARAB WORLD. I REPEATED WHAT WE HAD TRIED TO MAKE CLEAR TO HIM ABOUT HOW WE FEEL.

NOTE BY OC/T: PARA 16 (#) AS RECEIVED. CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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NODIS/CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM ATHERTON

DEPT PASS JIDDA FOR ATHERTON ONLY

21. I ASKED RIFAI ABOUT HIS CONTACTS WITH THE PLO IN DAMASCUS DEC 18 ON JORDANIAN ELECTIONS. HE SAID THEY HAD BEEN POLITE AND FRIENDLY BUT AT ONE POINT RUBBED HIM THE WRONG WAY. KHADDAM AND AYYUBI HAD SAT IN ON THE MEETING AND WERE MORE VIOLENT IN THEIR REACTION TO THE PLO THAN HE WAS. HE OUTLINED THE THREE ELECTION OPTIONS TO THE PLO--HOLD ELECTIONS DROPPING THE WEST BANK CONSTITUENCIES, RECONVENE THE OLD PARLIAMENT AND GO BACK ON THE RABAT DECISION, OR A THIRD OPTION OF BRINGING BACK THE PARLIAMENT MERELY TO EXTEND THE TIME PERIOD FOR ELECTIONS. HE MADE CLEAR TO THEM THAT THE LATTER COURSE WAS PREFERRED BY JORDAN BUT THAT JORDAN DID WANT THEIR VIEWS AND ANY OTHER SUGGESTIONS THEY MIGHT HAVE. THE PLO SAID THEY WOULD DISCUSS THE QUESTION, GET BACK IN TOUCH FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH JORDAN, AND REACH A JOINT DECISION. RIFAI SAID HE HIT THE ROOF AND TOLD THE PLO HE WAS ONLY AUTHORIZED TO INFORM THEM AND SEEK ANY OTHER IDEAS, NOT TO CONSULT. IF THE PLO DID NOT WANT US TO HAVE AN ELECTION, THEY SHOULD PUBLICIZE THEIR VIEW SO THAT IF THE ISRAELIS MOVED TO TAKE THE WEST BANK ON THE BASIS OF THE ELECTIONS, PLO WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE, NOT JORDAN. IF THEY WANT JORDAN TO REVERSE THE RABAT DECISION AND NOT HOLD AN ELECTION, THEN THEY SHOULD DECLARE IT. THE PLO THEN SUGGESTED A CONTINUING DIALOGUE FOR THE

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FUTURE, BUT RIFAI SAID HE WAS ONLY AUTHORIZED TO TALK ABOUT THE ELECTION. THE SYRIANS, RIFAI SAID, GAVE HIM SUPPORT WITH THE PLO.

2. RIFAI SAID HE TOLD THE PLO STRAIGHT THAT THEY NEED HELP AND HAD TO FORMULATE A POSITION ON THE NEGOTIATIONS. RIGHT NOW THEY WERE ACTING LIKE LOST BOYS. RIFAI SAID THAT HE WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO HOLD ELECTIONS, BUT THE KING FEELS, PERHAPS RIGHTLY SO, THAT IT IS BETTER TO KEEP OPTIONS OPEN AND GIVE OURSELVES SOME MORE TIME FOR

WHEN THINGS ARE MORE CLEARLY WORKED OUT.

PICKERING

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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 DEC 1975
Decapton Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decapton Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975AMMAN09771
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: AMMAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 2
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751226/aaaaawbb.tel
Line Count: 603
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 11
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 JUN 2003 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <04 NOV 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: LOCK1
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ATHERTON'S TALK WITH PRIME MINISTER RIFAI
TAGS: PFOR, JO, US, XF, PLO, (ATHERTON, ALFRED L JR), (RIFAI, AYD)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006